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ABSTRACT

This blueprint is intended to give employers and organized labor an overview of the issues involved in workplace literacy. The guide is divided into six sections. Section 1 defines and introduces workplace literacy. Section 2 highlights some of the issues employers and organized labor are facing as a result of low literacy levels in the workplace. In section 3, the different types of literacy programs are explained: general, work-related, and job-specific. Steps to follow when implementing a workplace literacy program are addressed in section 4. Section 5 lists resources for general literacy information as well as literacy providers in Minnesota. Section 6, the bibliography, lists seven resources for additional information on workplace literacy. (YLB)

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Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign

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Workplace Literacy: A Blueprint for Action

A Guide for Employers and Organized Labor

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1. Introduction

A. Literacy in the Workplace

According to Jonathan Kozol, author of Illiterate America, approximately 60 million Americans have inadequate basic skills. Many in this group cannot read or write well enough to handle the daily tasks necessary for living in today's world. Inadequate basic skills has become a national concern for it affects both men and women of all races and economic levels. For many it is a handicap that remains hidden because individuals with low level basic skills often do not have the confidence or the communication skills to ask for help, or they do not want to draw attention to their lack of education.

Low basic skills levels in adults is not just a national issue, it is also widespread throughout Minnesota. According to 1980 census data, an estimated 691,000 adults statewide need to improve their basic skills in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics. Many individuals are unable to read warnings, bus schedules, want ads or street signs. For these individuals, low literacy levels can be a barrier to leading productive lives, to having personal security, to participating in their communities and to obtaining self-esteem.

Literacy is a growing concern for all Minnesotans. Adults with low literacy levels cause increased costs for everyone. Correlations exist between illiteracy and welfare, unemployment and incarceration.

In the past few years, employees with low basic skills levels have become an important issue in the workplace. More and more employers are realizing that their employees are not ready to face the challenges of a more technical workplace. Additionally, trying to hire qualified individuals for entry level positions has become difficult. For Minnesota employers and organized labor to continue to grow and thrive, there must be qualified individuals available within the labor pool.

The first step in addressing the issue of low basic skills levels in Minnesota's workforce is to create an awareness that the situation exists. Once this fact is established, employers may begin to approach the specific needs of their workforce. By assessing the skill levels of employees, exploring the educational options available and finally implementing a literacy plan, employers will be able to improve the literacy skills of their employees.□

B. Definition of Workplace Literacy

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word "literate" is defined as the ability to read and write. The term "basic skills" has become synonymous with the word "literacy." As society has become increasingly complex, this definition has been expanded to include reading, writing, arithmetical computation, and the ability to communicate orally.

Literacy in the workplace takes this definition one step further. Workplace literacy is the possession of the skills necessary for decision-making, critical thinking, identifying and solving problems, setting goals, speaking and writing competently. It is the combination of skills needed to function in the work environment.

With the 21st century approaching and new technology being introduced, the workplace will continue to become more sophisticated. Therefore, the skills of the workforce must continuously improve to meet these new demands.□

C. Organization of this Guide

This Blueprint is intended to give employers and organized labor an overview of the issues involved in workplace literacy. The guide is divided into six sections. Section 1 defines and introduces workplace literacy. Section 2 highlights some of the issues employers and organized labor are facing as a result of low literacy levels in the workplace. In Section 3, the different types of literacy programs are explained. Steps to follow when implementing a workplace literacy program are addressed in Section 4. Section 5 lists resources for general literacy information as well as literacy providers in Minnesota and Section 6, the bibliography, lists resources for additional information on workplace literacy.□

2. Workplace Literacy: The Reality for Employers and Organized Labor

A. The Shrinking Labor Pool

Today's marketplace is extremely competitive and complex, and an educated workforce is a necessity for every employer. Yet according to census data, one in five adult Minnesotans does not have a high school diploma. These individuals are considered to be lacking the basic skills that would allow them to work to their full potential.

Studies show that a direct correlation exists between educational deficiencies and on-the-job functioning. Low level basic skills exist in all job categories and in all types of businesses. In the years ahead, as the demographics of the workforce continue to change, the need for improved basic skills levels will still exist. Statistics, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, show that 75% of the labor pool for the year 2000 is already in the workforce today. This means that current employees will need to continually upgrade their skill levels to keep up with new technology and job opportunities.

There are several factors that will contribute to the shortage of qualified workers in the years to come. The total number of young people entering the job market has already decreased and will continue to decline since the yearly birthrate has steadily dropped. Also, large numbers of individuals coming into the labor pool will be members of minority and disadvantaged groups. In addition, a greater percentage of individuals who once went into entry level jobs after high school are now going on to colleges or technical schools, which means that there will be a smaller labor pool from which employers must recruit potential workers. With entry level jobs becoming more complex and demanding, there will not be enough qualified workers to fill the available positions.

A shift in the occupational structure is also occurring. The number of manual labor jobs will continue to decrease as more positions open in the service area. According to studies completed by the U.S. Department of Labor, 40% of the jobs that will exist in the year 2001 do not currently exist today. Therefore, workers will need better basic skills so they can adapt and change with the fluctuations of job opportunities in the workplace. There is a definite need to upgrade the skills of the current workforce to allow it to fill the needs of employers in the years to come.□

B. The Profit and Loss Issue

In the workplace, employees functioning with low basic skills directly effects employers' profits. Increased errors, poor product quality, low productivity, increased absenteeism and even reduced international competitiveness are all directly influenced by employees lacking basic skills.

Another factor related to declining profits are consumers with low basic skills levels. Every year, business spends millions of dollars on advertising and product literature, yet these messages never reach many potential customers.

The bottom line shows that businesses operating in Minnesota are losing hundreds of thousands of dollars annually due in part to undereducated employees and consumers. Literacy has become a profit and loss issue that cannot be ignored.□

C. Realizing Human Potential

The lack of good basic skills has an effect on individuals. Poor self-esteem and the feeling of being inadequate can cause enormous stress, both at home and on the job. Even though individuals with low basic skills are employed and do work competently, many are extremely sensitive about their educational deficiencies. These individuals work very hard at keeping their lack of basic skills a secret, afraid that they will be fired or face ridicule if their secret is made public. Some devise elaborate ways of concealing their inability to read and write, including taking job applications home for their spouse to complete or feigning nearsightedness and saying they have forgotten their glasses. Because of the stigma attached to this situation, these individuals remain hidden and their true abilities go unrealized.□

D. The Causes of Low Basic Skills Levels

According to Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign (MALC) statistics, almost 23% of Minnesotans over the age of 16 do not have a high school diploma and are currently not enrolled in an educational program.

Low basic skills levels in adults are usually not caused by lack of ability or ini-

tiative. There are many other factors such as childhood illnesses or injuries, family economic situations which forced some to leave school to seek work, undiagnosed learning disabilities and inadequate or poor schooling. Many older adults did not complete high school, especially since entering the workforce or the military did not require high school level skills. Others may have completed high school, but with very low basic skills levels.

Every year, thousands of adults in Minnesota make dramatic changes in their lives by improving their basic skills. Many are motivated to improve their educational levels in reading, writing and increasing their computation skills. Given the opportunity, individuals can strive to reach their full potential, thus leading more productive lives both in and out of the workplace. One of the best investments an employer can make is providing employees with the opportunity to learn.□

E. It's Time to Meet the Challenge

Employers do not want to believe or admit that their workforce lacks basic skills. Yet, how often do employers have difficulty finding competent people to fill positions? How often do they complain about high turnover rates?

There is no quick fix for increasing the literacy skills of Minnesota's workforce. But one thing is certain, the workplace community needs to take an active role in improving the basic skills levels of employees. By forming partnerships between employers, organized labor and educators, the literacy needs of the workforce can be addressed.

Employers that have accepted this realization know that investing in the improvment of employees' skills levels is just plain good business sense. Many have established their own in-house basic skills programs as part of their employee education and training programs. Providing retraining is usually more cost-effective, since it is less expensive to retrain an employee than to fire and hire a new one.

Some employers are meeting the challenge of a more literate workforce by forming partnerships with their local school districts and adult basic education (ABE) programs, while others are donating in-kind services or promoting literacy programs to their employees.

Your organization can promote literacy in various ways. Every effort, no matter what the size, helps. You can support literacy by:

- Publicizing existing literacy programs by advertising the Basic Skills Hotline in company newsletters, on bulletin boards or by inserting stuffers in employees' paychecks.
- Encouraging company employees to volunteer as tutors in local literacy initiatives.
- Providing in-kind assistance to local literacy programs by offering space for classes, donating equipment, printing promotional materials or helping in fundraising

efforts.

- Giving grants to local adult literacy programs to serve more adult learners.
- Setting up an employee basic skills program in your workplace.
- Becoming a role model in the community to show other employers and labor organizations that they can make a difference by addressing their employees' literacy needs.
- Loaning company executives to help literacy agencies write proposals or seek grants, assist them in their budgeting and financial concerns, and help publicize and promote their services.
- Lobbying for more public support of adult literacy programs on the local, state and national level.

Whatever your level of participation, you will make a difference in addressing the literacy needs in your community.□

3. Types of Workplace Literacy Programs

There are three types of workplace literacy programs: general adult, work-related and job-specific. The needs of the employer and the employees help determine the appropriate program.

All three types of literacy programs may be adapted for the specific needs of employers as well as the skill levels of the employees. Individuals with low level reading skills or employees involved in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs need to have some general literacy material introduced to build their skill levels before moving into work-related or job-specific programs.□

A. General Adult Literacy Programs

General adult literacy programs are designed to expand an individual's general knowledge as well as improve literacy skills in a wide range of subject areas. General literacy programs are aimed at lower level learners, those without a high school diploma.

At the lowest levels, programs instruct individuals in the basic survival skills necessary for them to function in their everyday lives. Reading to a child, writing a letter, balancing a checkbook, or reading labels on medicine bottles are examples of the types of curriculum taught.

At the mid-level, adults are still working on improving their basic skills in all subject areas. Students at this level can read and write between the 5th and 8th

grade level. Curriculum is designed to increase their basic education levels in reading, writing, math, science and social studies.

The highest level of general literacy programs prepares students for their General Education Development certificate (GED) or high school diploma. These adults have already mastered most of the basic skills and are instructed in the five subject areas of the GED or take specific classes required to earn a diploma.

Brush-up classes are designed for adults who have already earned their high school diploma. Classes focus on the needs and interests of each individual student. Adults usually attend brush-up classes because of increased responsibility at the workplace or an interest in furthering their education which causes them to need additional instruction in subjects such as math and writing.

The benefits of general adult literacy programs are increased basic skills levels, self-confidence, self-esteem, job satisfaction, job stability and involvement in further educational activities. If an employer's goal is to improve an employee's performance in a specific job, a job-specific training program should be considered.□

B. Work-Related Literacy Programs

Work-related literacy programs are designed to improve the knowledge base in addition to, the literacy skills of an employee in the general work world. In work-related programs, the individual's needs and the requirements of the employer are examined. General workplace material is then introduced to the students. Curriculum is devised so that the employee receives training in a job-related context. The goal of this type of program is to specifically improve job performance.□

C. Job-Specific Literacy Programs

Job-specific literacy programs are designed to improve an employee's job-related knowledge and those basic skills which are directly applicable to an employee's position. Curriculum is designed to relate specifically to an employee's job and the actual tasks that the employee is required to perform. Research has shown that literacy programs which focus directly on teaching job-related tasks have a positive and long-lasting effect on job performance.□

Examples of Curriculum for Each Type of Literacy Program

Reading[1]

Program Type:	Basic	Mid-Level	Complex
General	Reads notice on AIDS and locates hotline number.	Reads several articles to determine community needs for AIDS patients.	Reseaches AIDS, makes recommendations on community actions and presents to local group.
Work-Related	Reads benefits package and identifies maternity benefits.	Reads and compares two different health plans' maternity benefits and selects the best coverage.	Participates on committee to assess maternity benefits packages, comes to a meeting prepared to recommend the best plan.
Job-Specific	Plant worker reads familiar directions in operations manual and performs the described tasks.	Plant worker reads unfamiliar directions in the operations manual of a new machine, refers to another manual for assistance in understanding the directions in the new manual and performs the described task.	Plant worker encounters a problem with a new machine, reads operations manual, reads repair guide, discusses the problem with a co-worker, determines cause of problem, reports information and his conclusion to his supervisor.

[1] Adapted from MATRICES Consultants, Inc. Workplace Literacy Seminar Workbook, 1987. P.6-5.

Math [2]

Program Type:	Basic	Mid-Level	Complex
General	Adds cost of 2 items on menu.	Reads menu, figures cost of 3 items and subtracts cost of meal from $10.00.	At lunch with co-workers, determines who ordered what, collects money from each person and calculates the change each should receive. Communicates these calculations to each co-worker.
Work-Related	Deposits money collected for retirement party in a designated account.	Calculates party costs by cost categories and total expenses.	Develops final budget plan to make presentation to committee about costs for retirement party.
Job-Specific	Production worker figures average weight of jars of popcorn on each hour of shift, adds total weight per hour and divides by number of jars per hour.	Production worker plots averages on graph and compares to company guidelines for jar weights.	Production worker determines why second hour showed overweight; reports findings to supervisor and discusses alternative solutions.

[2] Adapted from MATRICES Consultants, Inc. Workplace Literacy Seminar Workbook, 1987. P. 6-7.

Writing[3]

Program Type:	Basic	Mid-Level	Complex
General	Writes one or two paragraphs on how to choose a location for a summer vacation.	Reads several vacation guides on the National Parks. Writes to resorts in the parks to obtain information on price of rooms, meals included and activities.	Calls several travel agents to obtain information on package plans to National Parks. Takes notes and uses information to write a column for nature club newsletter.
Work-Related	Fills out an application for a special training program offered by company for employees interested in transferring to a newly formed department.	Writes to the head of the Training Department stating why employee's previous job experiences qualify him for the special training program.	Discusses training opportunities with the supervisor and the training director to obtain information and advice. Writes a letter to the new department head explaining his qualifications and interest in the new position.
Job-Specific	Customer service representative takes phone message for supervisor, records name, number of caller and reason for call.	Customer service representative handles request for information call. Looks up information in several sources and provides response to caller. Records what transpired.	Customer service representative receives complaint; assesses why caller has problem. Consults with others on staff to determine solution and explains to caller. When the caller is satisfied, transaction is summarized in a written report.

[3] Adapted from MATRICES Consultants, Inc. Workplace Literacy Seminar Wookbook. 1987. P. 6-9.

4. Implementing A Workplace Literacy Program

A. Creating the Planning Team

When implementing a workplace literacy program, it is essential to form a planning team. The planning team's purpose is to develop and incorporate the idea of a literacy program within the workplace and to insure employee acceptance and participation. The planning team should be comprised of a diverse group of employee representatives including training personnel, human resource personnel, department heads, plant managers, union representatives and the employees themselves. By including a variety of personnel, each group will take ownership of the program and the success will be important to all groups.

It is also important to include an educational provider on the team. The provider could be the coordinator of a local literacy project, a community education director or a lead teacher from an adult basic education program.

While management or labor leadership does not need to be actively involved, it is important that they show strong, visible support of the workplace literacy program. They should delegate the proper authority to the planning team to allow them to be truly productive and do a thorough job.

The planning team will be responsible for a variety of functions including developing awareness of literacy issues and programs, determining the scope of the needs assessment, and prioritizing the needs of the employer and employees. The planning team will also act as a resource or advisory group and will be a sounding board for all levels of employees. This team should have a long-term commitment to addressing the literacy needs of the employees.□

B. Assessing Needs and Resources

The planning team's first function is to perform an internal needs assessment which is also called a "literacy audit." The purpose of an audit is to:

1. Determine what basic skills the employees are lacking.
2. Identify the number of employees lacking these skills.

How to Perform a Literacy Audit[4]

1. Observe employee(s) to determine the basic skills they must use in order to perform their jobs effectively.

- Watch the employee(s) throughout a workday to be sure all tasks are observed. Continue this observation over a period of time if tasks change periodically rather than daily.
- Record each time the worker reads, writes or does an arithmetic calculation.
- Note the setting in which these basic skills activities take place.
- Note the materials used by the employee to perform the tasks involving basic skills activities.
- Determine the purpose of those tasks.
- Be aware of whether the tasks are performed individually or in groups.

2. Collect all materials that are written and read on the job to determine the degree of skill proficiency an employee must have to do the job well.

- Include memoranda, telephone messages, manuals, bills of sale, and forms such as inventory lists, balance sheets and requisition slips.
- Examine the materials to determine reading levels, necessary vocabulary and style.
- Analyze the content of these materials to determine their function.

3. Interview employees and their supervisors to determine their perception of the basic skills needed to do their jobs.

- Note the skills that the top-performing employees say are most important. Then ask them which skills they use most and how they use them.
- Examine discrepancies, if they exist, between the employees' and the supervisors' perceptions of skills needed.

4. Determine whether the employees have the basic skills needed to do their jobs well.

- Combine the information gathered from observing the employees, collecting the materials they use and performing interviews. Then, write-up a description of each of the audited jobs in terms of reading, writing and computation skills needed to perform them well.
- Return to the work setting to observe how or whether the tasks requiring these basic skills are performed.
- Discuss observations informally with employees and supervisors when problems are observed, to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty and concern.

5. Build tests that ask questions relating specifically to the employees' job or job group.

- Use job-related language and style.
- Use situations and formats in which the basic skills being tested will actually occur.
- Ask employees to perform the tasks that simulate what they encounter on the job.

By comparing the results of the test with the write up of the basic skills tasks embedded in the job(s), the literacy auditor can determine whether there is a basic skills problem in the workplace and what that problem is.

4 U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Labor. The Bottom Line: Basic Skills in the Workplace. Washington, D.C. 1988. Pp. 14-15.

3. Define the anticipated results of a workplace literacy program for both the employer and the employees.

The assessment can be as simple as determining the number of employees lacking a high school diploma, or as specific as defining skill levels required for each area of an employee's job. The needs assessment should give relevant information on specific areas within an employer's operation that are being affected by the lack of basic skills.

The most effective workplace literacy programs are targeted to the specific needs and goals of the employer and the employees. The educational provider on your planning team will be invaluable in helping you to perform the needs assessment.

Use the following questions as a guide in focusing your workplace literacy program :

- What business goals or standards are not currently being met?
- Will there be changes in the workplace environment that will create new goals or new performance standards?
- What new skills will be needed to perform effectively in specific jobs now and in the future?
- Do a substantial number of employees need improvement of their basic skills?
- If a workplace literacy program is implemented, what results are anticipated?

The operation of any workplace literacy program will require human, financial and physical resources. At the outset, the extent of these resources should be defined.

Many employers perform an in-depth job analysis that defines the specific basic skills competencies that are required for each job. This type of "literacy audit" is expensive, but it will give valuable information that will help in designing an effective workplace literacy program.

Employers may also wish to do a job analysis for employees. There is more incentive for employees to attend a job-related skills program if it leads to the possibility of greater job mobility or a job promotion.□

C. Establishing Program Goals

The needs assessment should have given you a good idea of the goals that need to be accomplished with your workplace literacy program. Program goals can be established in three main areas:

1. Operational Goals relate to program administration such as recruiting and orienting employees, keeping records, and specifying when and where classes will meet.

2. Instructional Goals relate to the teaching and learning process and include what will be taught, how and why.

3. Specific Goals will vary from employer to employer, but are based on the needs of the learners. They should be specific and task-related. An example of a

specific goal might be for one or more employees to write a work change order that can be understood by their co-workers. A product outcome might be to rewrite a technical manual in simpler language.

The educational provider should be involved in helping to identify instructional and product goals. Also, by stating specific program goals and expected outcomes at this point, the evaluation process will be made much easier.□

D. Selecting a Literacy Service

After completing the needs assessment, employers should be more aware of their employees' skill levels. If the need for a workplace literacy program is determined, the next step is to begin looking at the type of literacy service(s) that can address the identified needs. Most employers and organized labor do not have the internal resources necessary to develop and run their own programs. They should seek outside help in hiring staff, developing curriculum and teaching approaches, selecting appropriate materials, operating the program and evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

Comprehensive literacy services are available through a variety of programs that have been developed to meet the continuum of literacy needs. Your employees' needs may range from the most basic reading and writing skills to more complex skills which are taught at the post-secondary level. This continuum of basic skills instruction is provided by the following major groups in Minnesota. They include:

• **Adult Basic Education (ABE)** is administered through the Minnesota Department of Education. Available through local school districts, ABE offers classes to adults who have not completed the 12th grade. Classes are designed to help the adult: 1) increase basic skills; 2) get a first job or become a more productive employee; 3) increase self-esteem and personal productivity; and 4) better meet his/her responsibilities as a citizen and family member. Instruction is offered in basic skills, English as a Second Language (ESL), GED preparation, adult high school diploma classes and brush-up for adults with high school diplomas.

• **Refugee Education Programs** are administered through the Minnesota Department of Education. This system originally was funded to provide English language training to new refugees to the United States. Funding is provided to offer classes and volunteer training and coordination through established ABE programs, private non-profit organizations and local literacy programs.

• **Private Non-profit Organizations** also offer literacy services to adults who are in need of basic skills instruction. The **Minnesota Literacy Council, Inc.** (MLC), is a non-profit organization that operates the Minneapolis and St. Paul Literacy Projects. MLC projects provide basic literacy and English as a Second

Language tutoring for adults whose literacy skills are generally below the fifth grade level. Across the state, MLC provides training and technical assistance to a statewide volunteer literacy network. Utilizing several volunteer training systems, MLC is able to prepare volunteers to work in one-to-one, small group or ABE classroom settings.

The Minnesota Literacy Council is the only statewide private non-profit organization which offers low level literacy programs. However, there are private non-profit organizations within individual communities which offer literacy services for special needs populations or specific targeted populations. Examples include the **Learning Disabilities Association, Inc.** which provides diagnostic assessment of learning disabilities, tutoring and career planning services for Metro area adult learners affected by learning disabilities. **The Red School House, St. Paul,** serves primarily Native Americans who wish to improve their basic skills levels or to obtain a GED.

• **Technical Institutes** offer special needs programs and pre-vocational opportunities for adult learners who aspire to enroll in a vocational program, but lack the basic skills (reading, writing, language development and computation) to compete in a vocational program or workplace. Adult learners may opt to enroll in a full-time continuous program or the short term extension vocational program. This choice affords a continuum of training options ranging from individuals choosing to complete full training programs to completing individual short term training objectives.

• **Community College System** offers remedial and developmental programs in the areas of math, reading and study skills for adults who need extra instruction before enrolling in a college-level class. These classes do not count towards a student's degree and students should be enrolled in the community college system to take these classes.

• **Jobs and Training Programs** administered by the Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training, often have basic skills components. For example, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) services, delivered by 17 service delivery areas, frequently have provisions for literacy/basic skills training. Individuals meeting the economically disadvantaged JTPA participation criteria are assessed upon enrollment. When determined to be in need of literacy/basic skills training, clients are then guided into further training or job skills development. The Department of Jobs and Training may provide funding to local ABE/GED programs. Research has shown that the most effective basic skills programs are those which emphasize linkages with job training and actual jobs.

• **Libraries** generate public awareness of the importance of reading. They promote and support development of reading skills for children and adults, and offer materials and services for literacy providers and adult low level readers.

The single most important decision you will make is choosing the appropriate literacy service provider(s) for your program. In exploring the options for a workplace literacy partnership, you might determine that one provider system cannot deliver all of the services you need. In this case, a combination of providers may be needed. Select a provider system(s) that is flexible, can adapt to your educational needs; and one that understands your work environment and your targeted employees.□

E. Designing a Workplace Literacy Program

Now it is time to determine what type of program will address your specific situation. The educational provider and the planning team should be involved with this phase.

The diversity and immediacy of your employees' needs, the availablity of resources and the number of program participants will all have an impact on the design of the system. There are five program elements that must be considered:

1. Program Type: After considering the results of the needs assessment, employers should be able to determine the type of literacy program that will work best in improving the skill levels of employees. General adult literacy, work-related, job-specific or a combination of all three program types should be selected.

2. Management System: This refers to the specifics of the program such as recruitment of students, supervision of the educational providers, maintenance of records, reports for management and the preparation and implementation of evaluations.

3. Literacy Service Provider: The educational provider, with imput from the employer and planning team, will design a program and determine instructional strategies. Decisions about materials, methods and the evaluation process should also be made.

4. Location: The planning team needs to determine if the program will be held on-site at the workplace or at an off-site location such as a community center, library or public school.

5. Delivery System: This defines the logistics and standards for operation. It includes determining if attendance will be mandatory or voluntary, and if employees will be excused from work to participate or if classes will be held before or after work hours.□

F. Evaluating Your Workplace Literacy Program

The design of your workplace literacy program evaluation should be established in the planning phase. The evaluation is essential in showing the employer, the employees and the provider that the program objectives are being met.

Evaluation is an ongoing process which allows the educational provider, as well as the employer, to keep informed on the progress of the learners. With this information, programs can be adjusted as required.

At the beginning of the program, the planning team should decide what information will be needed for the evaluation. Evaluation forms should be designed and procedures on how and when the information will be collected should be determined. One of the best forms of evaluation is to compare the on-the-job performance of students in the program with non-participating employees. Formal or informal interviews should also be included to find out how workers feel about the classes. Another method is to give pre- and post-enrollment achievement tests to determine specific changes in learning skills. Questionnaires can also be designed to report changes in employees' job satisfaction and attitude; supervisors' opinions and observations; as well as actual job performance. Surveys on attendance and tardiness may also be included. But, two major questions should be answered:

1. Did the literacy program have any effect on the participants and the employer? and
2. To what extent are the effects an outcome of the actual workplace literacy program?

In addition to skills improvement, observable changes in the employees' attitudes should be documented. Interviewing co-workers, supervisors and literacy program staff, will give valuable insights into improved self-esteem and self-confidence of program participants. The evaluation process will mean more if you use some means of comparison, although this may be difficult to accomplish.□

Workplace Literacy Program Evaluation[1]

Type/ Level	Purpose	Strengths	Weaknesses	Examples	Guidelines for Development
Student Reaction	Measure student feelings about a program/ course.	• Easy to administer. • Provides immediate feedback on instructors, facilities and program design.	• Subjective. • Provides no measurement of learning, transfer of skills or benefit to the organization.	• "Happiness" reports. • Informal student/instructor interview. • Group discussion.	• Design a form which can be easily tabulated. • Ask questions which provide information about what you need to know: instructor effectiveness, facility quality, relevance of program content, etc. • Allow for anonymity and opportunity to provide additional comments.
Student Learning	Measure the amount of learning that has occurred in a program course.	• Provides objective data on the effectiveness of training. • Data can be collected before students leave the training program.	• Requires skill in test construction. • Provides no measurement of transfer of skills or benefit to the organization.	• Written pre/post tests. • Skills laboratories. • Role plays. • Simulations • Projects or presentations. • Oral examinations.	• Design an instrument which will provide quantitative data. • Include pre and post level of skill/ knowledge in design. • Tie evaluation items directly to program learning objectives.
Student Performance	Measure the transfer of training.	• Provides objective data on impact to job situation.	• Requires task analysis skills to construct and is time consuming to administer. • Can be a "politically" sensitive issue.	• Performance checklists. • Performance appraisals. • Critical incident analysis. • Self-appraisal. • Observation.	• Base measurement instrument on systematic task analysis of job. • Consider the use of a variety of persons to conduct the evaluation. • Inform participants of evaluation process.
Organization Results	Measure impact of training on organization.	• Provides objective data for cost/benefit analysis and organizational support.	• Requires high level of evaluation design skills; requires collection of data over a period of time. • Requires knowledge of organizational needs and goals.	• Employee suggestions. • Manufacturing indexes (cost, scrap, schedule compliance, quality, equipment donations). • QWL surveys. • Union grievances. • Absenteeism rates. • Accident rates. • Customer complaints.	• Involve all necessary levels of organization. • Gain commitment to allow access to organization indexes and records. • Use organization business plans and mission statement to identify organizational needs.

[1] U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Labor. The Bottom Line: Basic Skills in the Workplace. Washington, D.C. 1987. Pp. 38-39.

5. Resources

For General Literacy Information:

Basic Skills Hotline
Twin Cities Metro Area: 644-6631
Toll free statewide: 1-800-222-1990

The Hotline is a statewide information and referral service operated by the Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign. Referrals are made to literacy programs in all six major literacy provider systems, according to the callers' needs.

Business Council for Effective Literacy (BCEL)
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
212-512-2415/2412

BCEL is a publicly supported foundation established to foster greater corporate awareness of adult functional illiteracy and to increase business involvement in the literacy field. BCEL's work is carried out largely through a variety of publications and technical assistance programs.

Community Alliances for Literacy and Learning (CALL)
Contact: Sherry Lampman, Coordinator
College of St. Thomas
P.O. Box 4004
St. Paul, MN 55105
612-647-5471

CALL is a statewide project of the Minnesota Community Education Association and the Minnesota Library Foundation to support the development of local Literacy Action Councils. The Councils bring together educators and business, community and public leaders to coordinate local literacy activities.

Literacy Training Network (LTN)
Contact: Deb Simmons, Manager
College of St. Thomas
P.O. Box 4032
St. Paul, MN 55105
612-647-5188

LTN is a statewide public non-profit organization that provides staff training and development for Adult Basic Education instructors and volunteers. Its activities are funded by federal flow-through dollars.

Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign (MALC)
Contact: Dianne Dayton, Literacy Specialist
475 N. Cleveland Ave., Suite 210
St. Paul, MN 55104
612-644-9978

The Campaign is a five-year non-profit initiative to make adult literacy a statewide priority in Minnesota. Its program works to coordinate literacy services and planning and includes activities and services related to: information and referral, public awareness and student recruitment, workplace literacy, legislative and public policy concerns, resource development and literacy program enhancement/expansion/evaluation.

Minnesota AFL-CIO
Contact: Christine Matuzek, Director
Community Services/Education
Minnesota AFL-CIO
525 Park St., Suite 110
St. Paul, MN 55103
612-227-7647

The Minnesota AFL-CIO is committed to improving workplace literacy and is actively involved in addressing this issue through union initiatives.

Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training
Contact: Karen Wagner, Supervisor
Work and Training Unit
Department of Jobs and Training
150 E. Kellogg Blvd., Suite 690
St. Paul, MN 55101
612-297-4572

The Department of Jobs and Training administers Jobs and Training Programs that often have basic skills components. Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) clients in need of basic skills training are referred to local literacy agencies before entering job skills development and other training programs. The Department of Jobs and Training provides funding to local ABE programs on an individual client basis. It also funds public awareness and student recruitment projects.

Minnesota Literacy Council, Inc. (MLC)
Contact: Ellen Cree, Executive Director
275 N. Cleveland Ave., Suite 303
St. Paul, MN 55104
612-645-2277

MLC is the only statewide non-profit organization that offers literacy programs. MLC coordinates basic literacy and English as a Second Language tutoring for adults whose literacy skills are generally below the fifth grade level. MLC provides training and technical assistance to a statewide volunteer tutor literacy network and prepares volunteers to work in one-on-one, small group or ABE classroom settings.

Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS)
Contact: Wendy Wiberg or Jim Leinfelder
Twin Cities Public Television
1640 Como Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108
612-646-4611

PLUS is a national literacy awareness project of the ABC and PBS television networks. Focusing on workplace literacy in 1987-88, PLUS has developed a national documentary on workplace literacy titled "A Job to be Done."

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
Contact: Sara Dreiling, Community Affairs Director
600 NCL Tower
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
612-223-5000

The Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce is an organization that promotes conditions which help existing and new businesses grow and prosper. The Chamber supports and develops programs that assure businesses' greatest resource - its employees - are prepared and productive in the workplace.

For Literacy Programs and Services

Adult Basic Education (ABE)
Minnesota Department of Education
Contact: Robert Gramstad, Manager
550 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55101
612-296-8811
Or contact the Community Education Program in your local school district.

ABE is administered through the Minnesota Department of Education. Available from local school districts' Community Education programs, this system offers classes to adults who have less than a secondary education or skill level. Free instruction is offered in basic skills, GED preparation, English as a Second Language (ESL), adult high school diploma, and brush-up for adults with high school diplomas.

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA)
Contact: Kitty Christiansen, Director
2104 Park Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55404
612-871-9011

LDA is a private non-profit organization that provides diagnostic assessment of learning disabilities, tutoring and career planning services for adult learners affected by learning disabilities. Its program also includes consultative services and special programs.

Minnesota Community Colleges
Remedial/Developmental Programs
Contact: Jerry Isaacs, Director of Instructional Services
550 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55101
612-296-3650
Or contact the Remedial/Developmental program in your local community college.

Remedial/Developmental Programs, through the community college system, are available in the areas of math, reading and study skills for adults who need extra instruction before enrolling in college-level classes. For students who are enrolled in the Community College System, these classes do not offer credits toward a college degree.

Minnesota Literacy Council, Inc. (MLC)
Contact: Ellen Cree, Executive Director
275 N. Cleveland Ave., Suite 303
St. Paul, MN 55104
612-645-2277

As the only statewide private non-profit organization offering literacy programs, MLC coordinates basic literacy and English as a Second Language tutoring for adults whose literacy skills are generally below the fifth grade level. It operates the Minneapolis and St. Paul Literacy Projects which directly provide tutoring services and, in greater Minnesota, MLC provides training and technical assistance to a statewide volunteer tutor literacy network. MLC prepares volunteers to work in one-on-one, small group or ABE classroom settings.

Minnesota Technical Institutes
Special Needs/Support Services
Contact: Lloyd Petri, Instructional Services Specialist
550 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55101
612-296-5707
Or contact the Special Needs/Support Program in you local Technical Institute.

Special Needs/Support Programs in Minnesota Technical Institutes offer pre-vocational opportunities to adult learners who aspire to enroll in a vocational program or workplace. Limited English proficient adult learners are also served through short term occupational specific vocational English as a Second Language programs.

Refugee Educational Programs
Contact: Diane Pecoraro, Adult Refugee/ESL Specialist
Minnesota Department of Education
550 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55101
612-296-7500

Funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and administered through the Minnesota Department of Education, this system provides English Language Training to refugees. Services are provided through established ABE programs, private non-profit organizations and ethnic community-based organizations.

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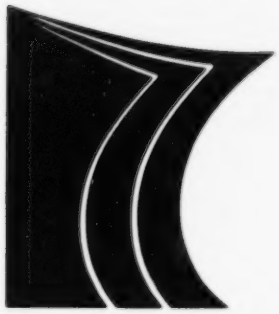

MINNESOTA ADULT LITERACY CAMPAIGN

475 NORTH CLEVELAND AVENUE
ST. PAUL, MN 55104 612/644-9978

The Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign is a five-year statewide initiative to make literacy services available to more undereducated adults. Incorporated in 1986, on the recommendation of Governor Perpich's Task Force on Adult Literacy, the Campaign prepared a Five-Year Plan to Address Adult Functional Illiteracy in Minnesota.

The Campaign's Workplace Literacy Task Force, formed in 1987, brings together representatives of business, industry, labor and education to address employees' literacy needs and to encourage private sector use and support of literacy programs and services.